Summit Aftermath: The View From the Oval Office

Text of Reagan's Broadcast Address On Talks With Gorbachev in Iceland

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 13.— Following is the text of President Reagan's broadcast address tonight on his meeting with the Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, in Iceland:

Good evening. As most of you know, I have just returned from meetings in Iceland with the leader of the Soviet Union, General Secretary Gorbachev. As I did last year when I returned from the summit conference in Geneva, I want to take a few moments tonight to share with you what took place in these discussions.

The implications of these talks are enormous and only just beginning to be understood.

We proposed the most sweeping and generous arms control proposal in history. We offered the complete elimination of all ballistic missiles — Soviet and American — from the face of the earth by 1996. While we parted company with this American offer still on the table, we are closer than ever before to agreements that could lead to a safer world without nuclear weapons.

But first, let me tell you that, from the start of my meetings with Mr. Gorbachev, I have always regarded you, the American people, as full participants. Believe me, without your support, none of these talks could have been held, nor could the ultimate aims of American foreign policy — world peace and freedom — be pursued. And it is for these aims I went the extra mile to Iceland.

Before I report on our talks though, allow me to set the stage by explaining two things that were very much a part of our talks, one a treaty and the other a defense against nuclear missiles which we are trying to develop. You've heard their titles a thousand times — the ABM treaty and S.D.I. Those letters stand for anti-ballistic missile and Strategic Defense Initiative.

Some years ago, the U.S. and the Soviet Union agreed to limit any defense against nuclear missile attacks to the emplacement in one location in each country of a small number of missiles capable of intercepting and shooting down incoming nuclear missiles. Thus leaving our real defense a policy called Mutual Assured Destruction, meaning if one side launched a nuclear attack, the other side could retaliate. This mutual threat of destruction was believed to be a deterrent against either side striking first.

So here we sit with thousands of nuclear warheads targeted on each other and capable of wiping out both our countries. The Soviets deployed the few anti-ballistic missiles around Moscow as the treaty permitted. Our country didn't bother deploying because the threat of nationwide annihilation made such limited defense seem useless.

Goal of Missile Shield

For some years now we have been aware that the Soviets have been developing a nationwide defense. They have installed a large modern radar at Krashnoyarsk which we believe is a critical part of a radar system designed to provide radar guidance for anti-ballistic missiles protecting the entire nation. This is a violation of the ABM treaty.

Believing that a policy of mutual destruction and slaughter of their citizens and ours was uncivilized, I asked our military a few years ago to study and see if there was a practical way to destroy nuclear missiles after their launch but before they can reach their targets rather than just destroy people. This is the goal for what we call S.D.I., and our scientists researching such a system are convinced it is practical and that several years down the road we can have such a system ready to deploy. Incidentally we are not violating the ABM treaty, which permits such research. If and when we deploy, the treaty also allows withdrawal from the treaty upon six months' notice. S.D.I., let me make it clear, is not pursuing a nonnuclear defense.

So here we are at Iceland for our second such meeting. In the first and in the months in between, we have discussed ways to reduce and in fact eliminate nuclear weapons entirely. We and the Soviets have had teams of negotiators in Geneva trying to work out a mutual agreement on how we could reduce or eliminate nuclear weapons. So far, no success.

On Saturday and Sunday, General Secretary Gorbachev and his Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and Secretary of State George Shultz and I met for nearly 10 hours. We didn't limit ourselves to just arms reductions. We discussed what we call violation of human rights on the part of the Soviets, refusal to let people emigrate from Russia so they can practice their religion without being persecuted, letting people go to rejoin their families, husbands and wives separated by national borders being allowed to reunite. In much of this the Soviet Union is violating another agreement — the Helsinki accords they had signed in 1975. Yuri Orlov, whose freedom we just obtained, was imprisioned for pointing out to his Government its violations of the pact, its refusal to let citizens leave their country or return.

Arms the Main Subject

We also discussed regional matters such as Afganistan, Angola, Nicaragua, and Cambodia.

But by their choice the main subject was arms control. We discussed the emplacement of intermediate-range missles in Europe and Asia and seemed to be in agreement they could be drastically reduced. Both sides seemed willing to find a way to reduce even to zero the strategic ballistic missiles we have aimed at each other. This then brought up the subject of S.D.I.

I offered a proposal that we continue our present research and if and when we reached the stage of testing we would sign now a treaty that would permit Soviet observation of such tests. And if the program was practical we would both eliminate our offensive missiles, and then we would share the benefits of advanced defenses.

I explained that even though we would have done away with our offensive ballistic missles, having the defense would protect against cheating or the possibility of a madman sometime deciding to create nuclear missles. After all, the world now knows how to make them. I likened it to our keeping our gas masks even though the nations of the world had outlawed poison gas after World War I.

We seemed to be making progress on reducing weaponry, although the General Secretary was registering opposition to S.D.I. and proposing a pledge to observe ABM for a number of years as the day was ending.

Secretary Shultz suggested we turn over the notes our note-takers had been making of everything we'd said to our respective teams and let them work through the night to put them together and find just where we stand in agreement and what differences separated us. With respect and gratitude, I can inform you they worked through the night till 6:30 A.M.

Yesterday, Sunday morning, Mr. Gorbachev and I, with our foreign ministers, came together again and took up the report of our teams. It was most promising. The Soviets had asked for a 10-year delay in the deployment of S.D.I. programs. In an effort to see how we could satisfy their concern while protecting our principles and security, we proposed a 10-year period in which we began with the reduction of all strategic nuclear arms, bombers, air-launched cruise missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine launched ballistic missiles and the weapons they carry.

Where Debate Began

They would be reduced 50 percent in the first five years. During the next five years, we would continue by eliminating all remaining offensive ballistic missiles, of all ranges. During that time we would proceed with research, development and testing of S.D.I. All done in conformity with ABM provisions. At the 10-year point, with all ballistic missiles eliminated, we could proceed to deploy advanced defenses, at the same time permitting the Soviets to do likewise.

Here the debate began. The General Secretary wanted wording that in effect would have kept us from developing the S.D.I. for the entire 10 years. In effect, he was killing S.D.I. and unless I agreed, all that work toward eliminating nuclear weapons would go down the drain — canceled.

I told him I had pledged to the American people that I would not trade away S.D.I. — there was no way I could tell our people their Government would not protect them against nuclear destruction. I went to Reykjavik determined that everything was negotiable except two things, our freedom and our future.

I am still optimistic that a way will be found. The door is open and the opportunity to begin eliminating the nuclear threat is within reach.

So you can see, we made progress in Iceland. And we will continue to make progress if we pursue a prudent, deliberate, and, above all, realistic approach with the Soviets. From the earliest days of our Administration, this has been our policy. We made it clear we had no illusions about the Soviets or their ultimate intentions. We were publicly candid about the critical moral distinctions between totalitarianism and democracy. We declared the principal objective of American foreign policy to be not just the prevention of war but the extension of freedom. And, we stressed our commitment to the growth of democratic government and democratic institutions around the world. That is why we assisted freedom fighters who are resisting the imposition of totalitarian rule in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, Cambodia, and elsewhere. And, finally, we began work on what I believe most spurred the Soviets to negotiate seriously — rebuilding our military strength, reconstructing our strategic deterrence, and, above all, beginning to work on the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Ways to Ease Tensions

And yet at the same time we set out these foreign policy goals and began working toward them, we pursued another of our major objectives: that of seeking means to lessen tensions with Soviets, and ways to prevent war and keep the peace.

This policy is now paying dividends — one sign of this in Iceland was the progress on the issue of arms control. For the first time in a long while, Soviet-American negotiations in the area of arms reductions are moving, and moving in the right direction: not just toward arms *control*, but toward arms *reduction*.

But for all the progress we made on arms reductions, we must remember there were other issues on the table in Iceland, issues that are fundamental.

As I mentioned, one such issue is human rights. As President Kennedy once said, "And, is not peace, in the last analysis, basically a matter of human rights . . .?"

I made it plain that the United States would not seek to exploit improvement in these matters for purposes of propaganda. But I also made it plain, once again, that an improvement of the human condition within the Soviet Union is indispensable for an improvement in bilateral relations with the United States. For a government that will break faith with its own people cannot be trusted to keep faith with foreign powers. So, I told Mr. Gorbachev — again in Reykjavik as I had in Geneva — we Americans place far less weight upon the words that are spoken at meetings as these, than upon the deeds that follow. When it comes to human rights and judging Soviet intentions, we are all from Missouri: you have got to show us.

Regional Conflicts

Another subject area we took up in Iceland also lies at the heart of the differences between the Soviet Union and America. This is the issue of regional conflicts. Summit meetings cannot make the American people forget what Soviet actions have meant for the peoples of Afghanistan, Central America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Until Soviet policies change, we will make sure that our friends in these areas — those who fight for freedom and independence — will have the support they need.

Finally, there was a fourth item. This area was that of bilateral relations, people-to-people contacts. In Geneva last year, we welcomed several cultural exchange accords; in Iceland, we saw indications of more movement in these areas. But let me say now the United States remins committed to people-to-people programs that could lead to exchanges between not just a few elite but thousands of everyday citizens from both our countries.

So I think then you can see that we did make progress in Iceland on a broad range of topics. We reaffirmed our four-point agenda; we discovered major new grounds of agreement; we probed against some old areas of disagreement.

And let me return again to the S.D.I. issue.

I realize some Americans may be asking tonight: Why not accept Mr. Gorbachev's demand? Why not give up S.D.I. for this agreement?

The answer, my friends, is simple. S.D.I. is America's insurance policy that the Soviet Union would keep the commitments made at Reykjavik. S.D.I. is America's security guarantee — if the Soviets should — as they have done too often in the past — fail to comply with their solemn commitments.

"S.D.I. is what what brought the Soviets back to arms control talks in Geneva and Iceland. S.D.I. is the key to a world without nuclear weapons."

In a statement after briefing European allies in Brussels today, Secretary of State George P. Shultz said that possibilities for progress had emerged in several areas and that it was important that they be pursued "energetically" in future negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Similarly, in a rare on-the-record briefing at the White House, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, the President's national security adviser, said the understandings reached between the two leaders in Iceland would be viewed as starting points for subsequent arms control bargaining.

"We are going to, as they say in the negotiating business, pocket these various pieces that they said they would agree to," Admiral Poindexter said. "Whether they will admit now that they have agreed to these things or not remains to be seen, but in the meetings they did agree to them and we will try to hold them to that agreement at some point in the future."

Congressional reaction generally was mixed and along partisan lines, *with Republicans* supporting Mr. Reagan's refusal to restrict "Star Wars" development and Democrats criticizing the President for missing what they said was a historic opportunity to eliminate offensive nuclear weapons.

In his address, Mr. Reagan provided a detailed explanation of the two days of talks, especially the two leaders' discussion of arms control. According to his account, the Russians sought a 10-year delay in the development of the defense system outside the laboratory and the United States responded by proposing a two-part formula for eliminating offensive weapons that tried to meet Soviet concerns over "Star Wars."

The President said the American proposal involved a reduction in all strategic nuclear weapons by 50 percent over a five-year period, while research, development and testing continued on the defense system under existing provisions of the 1972 antiballistic missile treaty.

At the end of the 10-year period, he said, all ballistic missiles would be eliminated and either country could then deploy the defense shield.

'He Was Killing S.D.I.'

"Here the debate began," Mr. Reagan said. "The General Secretary wanted wording that in effect would have kept us from developing S.D.I. for the entire 10 years. In effect, he was killing S.D.I., and unless I agreed, all that work toward eliminating nuclear weapons would go down the drain — canceled."

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Administration officials said Mr. Reagan had balked at Mr. Gorbachev's insistence on changes in the 1972 antiballistic missile treaty to prevent research, testing and development of missile-defense systems beyond the laboratory.

Mr. Reagan, who appeared grim, repeated his argument that the Soviet Union was already seeking to develop its own system to defend against nuclear missiles and was doing so in a manner that violated the 1972 treaty. He accused Mr. Gorbachev of seeking to change the agreement through his offer limiting testing to the laboratory.

"I told him that we don't make those kinds of deals in the United States," Mr. Reagan said.

'Why Are Soviets So Adamant?'

As he sought public understanding of his position, Mr. Reagan appeared to be nearly pleading with the Soviet leader to drop his opposition to the "Star Wars" system and to accept an agreemept reducing offensive nuclear weapons.

"How does a defense of the United States threaten the Soviet Union or anyone else?" Mr. Reagan said. "Why are the Soviets so adamant that America remain forever vulnerable to Soviet rocket attack?"

"As of today, all free nations are utterly defenseless against Soviet missiles — fired either by accident or design. Why does the Soviet Union insist that we remain so — forever?"

Mr. Reagan's speech was more upbeat in tone than the gloomy and even angry assessment that Administration officials delivered on Sunday after the talks ended. Admiral Poindexter, who agreed today that such an impression had been given, said it was because the top Reagan aides were tired.

Mr. Reagan said tonight that although he could not promise that the Iceland talks or future discussions would lead inevitably to great breakthroughs or major agreements, he was optimistic.

"Our ideas are out there on the table," he said. "They won't go away."

The New York Times/Paul Hosefros

WELCOME BACK: President and Nancy Reagan being greeted by their daughter Maureen on White House South Lawn Sunday night after the President's return from Iceland.

The New York Times/Paul Hosefros

RETURNING STAFF: Donald T. Regan, center rear, White House chief of staff, walking from helicopter to the White House. In foreground, Adm. John M. Poindexter, right, national security adviser, and Vice President Bush.

Reagan Blames Gorbachev for Impasse, but Says Accord Is Possible

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bachev as to when or whether he plans to travel to the United States, as we agreed he would last year in Geneva. I repeat tonight that our invitation stands and that we continue to believe additional meetings would be useful. But that's a decision the Soviets must make."

Mr. Reagan made it clear that the key obstacle in Iceland had been his refusal to accept Soviet constraints on "Star Wars" development.

Mr. Gorbachev had offered to make reductions in long and medium-range offensive nuclear missiles in return for an agreement that Mr. Reagan said would restrict the development of the new missile-defense system.

Once the Soviet leader focused on the missile defense, Mr. Reagan said, it became a case of his preferring "no agreement" to a "bad agreement."

A Bid to Blunt Criticism

The speech reflected a long explanation of his thinking during the negotiations, and Mr. Reagan seemed to take pains to blunt domestic and international criticism that he had thrown away a chance for an arms control agreement by clinging to an unreasonable devotion to "Star Wars."

Speaking of the Strategic Defense Initiative, the President said:

"I realize some Americans may be asking tonight: 'Why not accept Mr. Gorbachev's demand? Why not give up S.D.I. for this agreement?'

"The answer, my friends, is simple. S.D.I. is America's insurance policy that the Soviet Union would keep the commitments made at Reykjavik. S.D.I. is America's security guarantee — if the Soviets should — as they have done too often in the past — fail to comply with their solemn commitments.

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"Our ideas are out there on the table," he said. "They won't go away."

Forever Vulnerable?

The Soviets understand this. They have devoted far more resources, for a lot longer time than we, to *their own* S.D.I. The world's only operational missile defense today surrounds Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union. What Mr. Gorbachev was demanding at Reykjavik was that the United States agree to a new version of a 14-year-old ABM traty that the Soviet Union has already violated. I told him we don't make those kinds of deals in the United States.

And the American people should reflect on these critical questions.

How does a defense of the United States threaten the Soviet Union or anyone else? Why are the Soviets so adamant that America remain forever vulnerable to Soviet rocket attack? As of today, all free nations are utterly defenseless against Soviet missiles — fired either by accident or design. Why does the Soviet union insist that we remain so — forever?

So, my fellow Americans, I cannot promise, nor can any President promise, that the talks in Iceland or any future discussions with Mr. Gorbachev will lead inevitably to great breakthroughs or momentous treaty signings.

We will not abandon the guiding principle we took to Reykjavik. We prefer no agreement than to bring home a bad agreement to the United States.

Another Summit Date

And on this point, I know you are also interested in the question of whether there will be another summit. There was no indication by Mr. Gorbachev as to when or whether he plans to travel to the United States, as we agreed he would last year in Geneva. I repeat tonight that our invitation stands and that we continue to believe additional meetings would be useful. But that's a decision the Soviets must make.

But whatever the immediate prospects, I can tell you that I am ultimately hopeful about the prospects for progress at the summit and for world peace and freedom. You see, the current summit process is very different from that of previous decades; it is different because the world is different; and the world is different because of the hard work and sacrifice of the American people during the past five and a half years.

Your energy has restored and expanded our economic might; your support has restored our military strength. Your courage and sense of national unity in times of crisis have given pause to our adversaries, heartened our friends, and inspired the world. The Western democracies and the NATO alliance are revitalized and all across the world nations are turning to democratic ideas and the principles of the free market. So because the American people stood guard at the critical hour, freedom has gathered its forces, regained its strength, and is on the march.

So, if there is one impression I carry away with me from these October talks, it is that, unlike the past, we are dealing now from a position of strength, and for that reason we have it without our grasp to move speedily with the Soviets toward even more breakthroughs.

Our ideas are out there on the table. They won't go away. We are ready to pick up where we left off. Our negotiators are heading back to Geneva, and we are prepared to go forward whenever and wherever the Soviets are ready. So, there is reason — good reason — for hope.

Dream and Destiny

I saw evidence of this in the progress we made in the talks with Mr. Gorbachev. And I saw evidence of it when we left Iceland yesterday, and I spoke to our young men and women at our Naval installation at Keflavik — a critically important base far closer to Soviet naval bases than to our own coastline. As always, I was proud to spend a few moments with them and thank them for their sacrifices and devotion to country. They represent America at her finest: committed to defend not only our own freedom but the freedom of others who would be living in a far more frightening world — were it not for the strength and resolve of the United States.

"Whenever the standard of freedom and independence has been . . . unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions, and her prayers," John Quincy Adams once said. He spoke well of our destiny as a nation. My fellow Americans, we are honored by history, entrusted by destiny with the oldest dream of humanity — the dream of lasting peace and human freedom.

Another President, Harry Truman, noted that our century had seen two of the most frightful wars in history. And that "the supreme need for our time is for man to learn to live together in peace and harmony."

It is in pursuit of that ideal I went to Geneva a year ago and to Iceland last week. And it is in pursuit of that ideal that I thank you now for all the support you have given me, and I again ask for your help and your prayers as we continue our journey toward a world were peace reigns and freedom is enshrined.

Thank you and God bless you.